

Weathering and Soil Formation ▪ *Guided Reading and Study*

How Soil Forms

This section explains how soil forms. The section also describes several features of soil, the living things found in soil, and the types of soil found in the United States.

Use Target Reading Skills

After reading the section, write a definition of each Key Term in your own words below.

soil: _____

bedrock: _____

humus: _____

fertility: _____

loam: _____

soil horizon: _____

topsoil: _____

subsoil: _____

litter: _____

decomposer: _____

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What Is Soil?

1. The loose, weathered material on Earth's surface in which plants can grow is _____.
2. The solid layer of rock beneath the soil is called _____.

3. What is soil composed of?

4. List the three types of weathered rock particles found in soil.

a. _____ b. _____

c. _____

5. The decayed organic material in soil is called _____.

6. Circle the letter of the choice that lists soil particles from largest to smallest.

a. sand, gravel, clay, silt

b. gravel, sand, silt, clay

c. gravel, silt, sand, clay

d. gravel, sand, clay, silt

7. Soil that is made up of about equal parts of clay, sand, and silt is called _____.

8. How does soil form?

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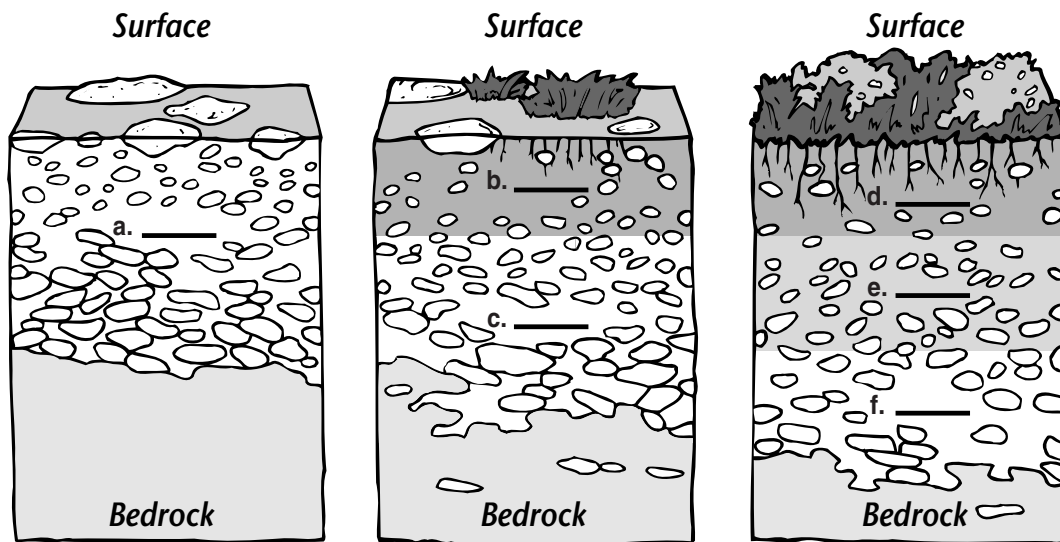
How Soil Forms *(continued)*

The Process of Soil Formation

Match the soil horizon with its makeup.

Soil Horizon	Makeup
____ 9. A	a. Topsoil
____ 10. B	b. Weathered rock particles
____ 11. C	c. Subsoil

12. Label each of the soil horizons shown in the three drawings as A, B, or C horizon.



13. Circle the letter of each sentence that is true about the rate of soil formation.
- a. It is faster in areas that are cold.
 - b. It is slower in areas that are dry.
 - c. It is faster with limestone than granite.
 - d. It is unaffected by the type of rock being weathered.

Soil Types

14. Circle the letter of each factor that scientists use to classify the different types of soil into groups.
- a. climate
 - b. plant types
 - c. soil composition
 - d. size of animal populations
15. Is the following sentence true or false? The soil type of northeastern United States and Canada is southern forest soils.
- _____

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Living Organisms in Soil

16. How do soil organisms improve soil?

17. Is the following sentence true or false? Animals contribute most of the organic remains that form humus. _____

18. As plants shed leaves, they form a loose layer called

19. Soil organisms that turn dead organic matter into humus are called

20. List four soil decomposers.

a. _____ b. _____

c. _____ d. _____

21. Circle the letter of each choice that is an example of fungi.

- a. molds
- b. mushrooms
- c. bacteria
- d. earthworms

22. Is the following sentence true or false? Earthworms do most of the work of mixing humus with other materials in soil. _____

23. How can burrowing mammals improve soil?
